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Letter No. 2355

March 24, 1988

**USSR PURCHASES
DURING FINAL YEAR
OF LTA**

As of March 18, the Soviet has purchased 6,935,800 metric tons of wheat during the current and final year of the U.S.-USSR long-term agreement on grain purchases. The Soviets have also purchased 3,972,100 metric tons of corn; 813,000 metric tons of soybeans; and 1,300,000 tons of soybean meal.

**SOVIET ELIGIBLE
FOR MORE WHEAT**

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Soviet Union is eligible for the purchase of an additional one million metric tons of U.S. wheat under the Export Enhancement Program. This program will enable U.S. exporters to compete at commercial prices in the Soviet market. The Soviet has already purchased over 10,814,800 metric tons of U.S. wheat under previously announced allocations of the Export Enhancement Program.

**STRONGEST
ECONOMIC
GROWTH**

While the United States and Japanese economies may grow about 3 percent in 1988, other industrialized countries are expected to grow at about a half percent less. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, increased exports will lead economic growth in the U.S. However, in Japan, growth will be fueled by government-inspired moves to bolster domestic demand, which exceeded 7 percent in third-quarter 1987.

**FARM SECTOR
IN COMEBACK**

The farm sector is continuing its strong income and financial performance of 1987, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The net cash income is forecast to be the second highest on record, between \$50 and \$55 billion, down slightly from 1987's \$57 billion. Crop receipts are up from last year, but are more than offset by lower livestock receipts, rising expenses, and lower Government payments. The income and debt-service problems that plague agriculture during the 1980's have largely been weathered, although financial problems persist for some producers who acquired long-term debt at high interest rates. A major contributor to increased cash flow is a marked reduction in interest expenses since the difficult 1980-83 years.

**ALTERNATIVE
MANAGEMENT**

Farmers are trying alternative management practices, such as reduced inputs, integrated pest management, different crop rotations, and different weed control methods, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Alternative farming systems emphasize making profits and protecting the environment.

CITRUS & BEEF
& JAPAN

In a March 22 press briefing in Washington on Japanese quotas on beef and citrus imports, Sec'y of Agriculture Lyng said, "We would like very much for them to announce the removal of the import quotas on those items." Sec'y Lyng also showed photos taken on March 1 in Japan and in the U.S., showing the same oranges, priced 33 cents in the U.S., and 65 cents in Japan. Grapefruit, 32 cents in Washington, 73 cents in Tokyo. Strip sirloin steak, \$4.99 a pound in Washington, \$20.56 a pound in Tokyo.

SALES ACTIVITY
TO USSR AND
JAPAN

Private exporters reported to the U.S. Department of Agriculture on March 18 the export sales of 500,000 metric tons of corn for delivery to the USSR during the 1987-88 marketing year. Also 109,728 tons of corn for delivery to Japan during 1987-88.

SALES TO
CHINA

Private exporters reported to the U.S. Department of Agriculture on March 21 the export sales of 200,000 metric tons of soft red winter wheat for delivery to China during the 1988-89 marketing year.

HALF OF WHEAT
SAMPLES TOP
GRADE

Fifty percent of all wheat samples in the 1987 National New Crop Wheat Study found 50 percent of all wheat samples in the study ranked at the top grade for quality, U.S. number 1, and an additional 23 percent of samples ranked number 2, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The study also reported that 75 percent of the hard red spring wheat samples were graded number 1 in 1987, compared to 70 percent in 1986. For hard red winter wheat, the largest production wheat, samples graded number 1 and number 2 increased from 70 percent of total samples in 1986 to 76 percent in 1987.

FEBRUARY
CATFISH

Catfish raised on farms and processed during February totaled 27 million 800 thousand pounds round weight, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. That's 25 percent above February 1987. The February average price paid to growers was 72 cents per pound, 15 cents above the same month last year.

WATER SUPPLY
OUTLOOK BLEAK
IN WEST

A record low precipitation in sections of the West in February has further reduced what was already a very low water supply, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The situation during February worsened in California, Nevada, Montana, Idaho, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming. The water supply, however, is very good in Arizona, New Mexico, and the lower part of Colorado.

HORTICULTURAL
PRODUCTS
EXPORTS

U.S. exports of horticultural products, to destinations other than Canada, started off 1988 with a bang, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. January exports were \$225 million 600 thousand, which is \$66 million 500 thousand more than in January 1987. The January, 1988, exports were led by increased sales of apples, grapefruit, onions, almonds, canned corn, dried prunes and wine. The increased onion exports were due to large purchases by Japan. The increase in apple exports was due to larger shipments to Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

"NURSERY STRAIN"
CITRUS CANCKER A technical panel of nine prominent university scientists are assisting the U.S. Department of Agriculture in evaluating the biology and classification of the "nursery strain" of citrus canker. The reason for this panel is that questions continue to be raised by the U.S. citrus industry regarding the nature and seriousness of the "nursery strain" of citrus canker found on citrus nursery stock in Florida.

MODERNIZING
CORNBREAD Cornbread, that crumbly accompaniment to ham and beans, could take on a smooth, uniform texture to become a new sandwich and toast bread. Scientists with the U.S. Department of Agriculture have developed a bread using fine-ground corn flour blended with wheat bread flour. The wheat gives it a smooth, uniform texture. The bread has a delicate corn flavor and a rich golden color. And it tastes good.

BUSY CHICKENS The nation's laying flocks produced 17 billion 600 million eggs during the December 1987 through February 1988 quarter, up 2 percent from the corresponding quarter a year ago, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Of this amount, 15 billion 600 million were for table use, and 2 billion 50 million for hatching.

FROM OUR RADIO
SERVICE AGRICULTURE USA #1608 (Weekly 13½ min documentary) How can you make this year's home garden the most productive in years? George Holmes talks with USDA expert Ray Webb.

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1596 (Weekly reel of news features) USDA news highlights; Government and industry team up against a poultry disease; Electronic information; Record U.S. wood exports; Trees and the Conservation Reserve.

CONSUMER TIME #1088 (Weekly reel of 2½-3 min features) Nutrients for cutting cancer risk; Broiler bargains, cancer prevention and cabbage; All terrain vehicles; Potato peel perils.

USDA RADIO NEWS SERVICE Fri, Apr. 1, Tobacco situation; Tues, Apr. 5, Crop/weather update, Dairy product output; Mon, Apr. 11, U.S. crop production, Soviet grain outlook, World supply and demand; Tues, Apr. 12, Crop/weather update, World ag/grain production, World oilseed situation, World cotton situation; Thurs, Apr. 14, Oil crops outlook, Ag. resources outlook. Dial the USDA National News Line 202-488-8358 or 8359. All material changed at 5 p.m. ET each working day.

TELEVISION SERVICE programs, A BETTER WAY, DOWN TO EARTH, AGRICULTURAL UPDATE and SATELLITE NEWS are available on satellite Westar IV, audio 6-2 or 6-8 as follows:

Thursdays AG UPDATE/SATELLITE NEWS, 7:30-7:45 p.m. ET Transponder 12D

Saturdays A BETTER WAY, 10:00-10:30 a.m. ET Transponder 9X
ORIGINAL DOWN TO EARTH, 10:30-11:00 a.m. ET Transponder 9X
UPLINK SATELLITE NEWS/AG UPDATE, 11:00-11:15 a.m. ET Transponder 9X

Mondays A BETTER WAY, 8:00-8:30 a.m. ET Transponder 12D
REPEAT DOWN TO EARTH, 8:30-9:00 a.m. ET Transponder 12D
UPLINK SATELLITE NEWS/AG UPDATE, 9:00-9:15 a.m. ET Transponder 12D

A BETTER WAY is also available on The Learning Channel SATCOM 3R, Transponder 2, Audio 6-8 each Thursday at 10:30 a.m. ET.

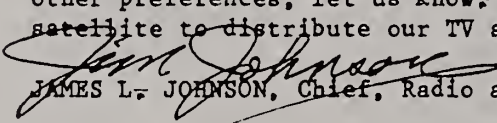
OFF MIKE

The date must have been at least two years ago. Four friends and addicted golfers started talking about spending a long weekend at Myrtle Beach, pigging out on golf. This past weekend, those plans came to fruition, thanks to the pending departure from the area by yours truly. The other three masochistic golfers were Johnnie Hood (KPTF/Southern Farm Net, Raleigh, NC), Hugh Whaley (American Soybean Assoc., St. Louis, MO), and Jim Mills (NAFB Sales/Mktng Director, Herndon, VA). Water, sand, trees, salt marshes, oyster shells, and love grass--those were the natural hazards. (Other hazards included fellow golfers!) But we came through it all safely, and yours truly can go off to Oregon happy to have fulfilled a dream. Incidentally, Johnnie Hood says he's going to write a guest column for Offmike and make all kinds of disparaging remarks. All we can say is, "You'll need to contend with Margaret Desatnik after April 1st." She'll be the acting chief, and her deputy will be Don Elder. Our apologies to you if

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you were one of those who called in Wednesday to get on our live feed of the Sec'y Richard Lyng/Ambassador Yeutter press conference. Hopefully, we'll catch you next time. Our Vic Powell (producer USDA Satellite News Service) came across an interesting poll the other day concerning whether television news directors preferred getting video news releases via videotape or satellite. The poll showed 78% of the 125 news directors responding to a survey preferred videotape. Almost half of those 78% said they preferred tape because it didn't require special scheduling. The majority (68%) said they preferred VNRs to be 90 seconds to 2 minutes long. How do those statistics compare to your preferences? If you have other preferences, let us know. At present we're using satellite to distribute our TV shows, but that could change.


JAMES L. JOHNSON, Chief, Radio and Television Division